Finance Corporation on the pattern of the ongoing Ultra Mega Power Projects. The views of the State Government are awaited.

Shortage of coal stock at thermal stations

1015. SHRIMATI KANIMOZHI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

whether thermal stations face severe shortage of coal stocks;

if so, the reasons therefor; and

the remedial action taken to manage the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL(DR. DASARI NARAYAN RAO): (a) There has been a depletion of coal stocks at some power plants during this year. However, as per CEA, it has not affeted generation, which has registered a growth of 4% during April-October, 2007 compared to corresponding period of previous year.

The major reasons for stock depletion in those Thermal Power Stations include increase in Plant Load Factor or some power stations, unloading constraints at power house end, less availability of coal from Captive mines of Power Utilities, Law and Order problems which affect both coal mining and despatch, inventory control by some of the power stations, less import of coal *viz-a-viz* the targetted level, transportation constraints in evacuation of coal fi-om mines to sidings, adverse geo-mining conditions, problems relating to land acquisition etc.

In order to ensure adequate supply of coal to all power utilities, the supply of coal is reviewed by the Standing Linkage Committee (Short-term), which is an inter-ministerial body, on a quarterly basis. There is also a Sub-group under the Chairmanship of Additional Secretary comprising the representatives of Ministry of Power, Railways and Central Electricity Authority to monitor supply of coal to various power stations. The corrective measures taken by the Sub-group from time to time in the past have ensured sufficient supply of coal to various power utilities to prevent loss of generation of power due to non availability of coal.

Royalty on coal and other minerals

†1016. SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

whether it is a fact that States are facing difficulty as royalty on coal and other minerals is not revised;

if so, whether State Governments have demanded that royalty should be revised;

if so, the decision taken by Government in this regard; and

whether Government would compensate for the loss incurred by States due to non-revision of royalty?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (DR. DASARI NARAYAN RAO): (a) to (d) The royalty rates on coal and lignite have been revised with effect from 01.08.2007. The royalty rates on coal were earlier revised on 16.08.2002. Section 9(3) of the Minies and Minerals (Development & Regulation) Act, 1957 empowers the Central Government to enhance or reduce the royalty rates in respect of any mineral by notification

†Original notice of the question was rectived in Hindi

in the Official Gazette with effect from such date as may be specified in the notification. The proviso to Section 9(3) of the Act prevents the Central Government from enhancing the rate of royalty in respect of any mineral more than once during any period of three years. The Act does not mandate any specific time frame for revision of rates of royalty. Royalty rates are revised after taking into consideration the interests of all stakeholders and the overall economic scenario in the country. As such, the question of compensation for the loss to the State Governments on this account does not arise.

Mining lease applications

1017. MS. MABEL REBELLO: Will the PRIME MFNISTER be pleased to state:

whether it is a fact that a large number of industries whose mining lease applications have been recommended by the State Government of Jharkhand io the Ministry of Coal almost 6 months ago and his Ministry has not cleared the same;

whether the Ministry has made any reference to seek clariflcation from Jharkhand Government or from the allottees;

the reasons for the undue delay;

the number of such pending cases which have already been recommended by the State Government and are waiting to be cleared by the Ministry; and

the time period taken/required to clear such projects?

THE MFNISTER OF STATE FN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (DR. DASARI NARAYAN RAO): (a) and (b) No, Sir. However, an application for mining lease duly recommended by the State of Jharkhand in respect of Moitra coal block allocated to M/s. Jayaswal Neco Ltd., was received in the Ministry in the first week of June, 2007. Another application in respect of Badam coal block allocated to M/s. Tenughat Vidyut Nigam Ltd., was received in the Ministry in the last week of July, 2007.

The prior approval in respect of Moitra coal block could not be given for the reason that the mining area, to be recommended for mining lease, was getting examined. The State Government of Jharkhand has been requested on 11.09.2007 to clarify/confirm the mining area to be covered under the mining lease. Reply from the State Government is awaited. In respect of Badam coal block also, mining area to be recommended for mining lease is getting verified.

No case except the two cases referred to in reply to part (a) above are pending in the Ministry.

The proposals received from the State Governments are cleared expeditiously except in those cases which require further examination/clarification from the State Governments.

Regulatory authority for coal sector

1018. SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

whether it is proposed to set up a regulatory authority for coal sector;

if so, the details thereof; and

if not, the reasons therefor?